2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

pression liable to flooding in the rainy season. The people of the Tong Hills consider themselves to be particularly fortunate in this respect. Their homesteads stretch densely across the slopes of the hills, and amid the great boulders and rocky piles of the summit. Singing the praises of their tiny fastness, they contrast it with the plain, where one is always ankle-deep in mud and slush during the rains and scorched by the sun in the dry season. On the hills, they say, a sheltered nook can always be found among the rocks, shady when the sun is most cruel, dry in the severest storm, where the children can play or the grown-ups sit and talk.

The Stability and Continuity of a Settlement

Stability and continuity are essential characteristics of a settlement. They are implied in the native concept of a *tɛŋ* (settlement) as both a definite locality and a fixed community. The ancient settlements have attained a very high degree of stability and continuity. The peripheral settlements are rapidly ceasing to be mere economic apanages to the older centres of habitation, and are taking on the form of permanent and stable units. Being still in process of organization, their structure is fluid compared with that of the ancient settlements, and the dynamic factors of Tale social structure sometimes appear more conspicuously in them than in the latter.

But the older settlements are by no means static. The bounds, the layout, and the internal constitution of a settlement alter continuously, if very slowly. Even in a single year one can see how processes of expansion and contraction, of segmentation and incorporation, are at work all the time. Whenever land changes hands by inheritance, or an office passes by succession, or a man achieves economic independence, a minor reshuffle in the collocation of homesteads takes place. The cumulative effects of these processes of slow but progressive readjustment are clearly exhibited in the contemporary structure of a settlement. They are documented in its constitution and layout, in the location of ancestral graves, the ownership of farm plots, and in ceremonial and political relations. Fixity of location and of the structural plan ensure the stability and continuity of a Tale settlement.

Topographical Distinctions and the Natives' Knowledge of Natural History

Precise local orientation is essential in the economic activities and social relations of the Tallensi. Place-names are often derived from prominent topographical or geographical features. Thus, Tɛnzugu means the head (*zug*) or highest part of the country (*tɛŋ*), Yaɣazuor means 'perched on a hill', and many other place-names are popularly believed to be corruptions of topographical or spatial metaphors. Within a settlement topographical variations are distinguished by terms like *tɛŋɣɛ*, the lower part (the locative of *tɛŋ*, here in the sense of 'ground'), and *saazugu*, the higher part (lit. head-high, or high up). Conspicuous patches of low-lying land, hillocks, rock piles, ditches, water-holes, streams, &c., are named, and are very often sacred spots. The name may indicate peculiar qualities of the soil, prominent trees, or other landmarks formerly or still

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

found at that spot. Thus, Sielug is an uninhabited part of Zubiuŋ, where clay (*siela*) is abundant near the surface, making it unsuitable for cultivation and therefore a favourite pasture. Nayaberaabo'og ('cattle-poison-grass valley'), the tract of low-lying land renowned as the traditional battle-field of Tongo and Ba'ari, appears to be named after a kind of grass believed to be noxious to cattle. Other such names have a legendary flavour, but the Tallensi, with their characteristic realism, have no myths or legends to account for them. Locality names of this kind are Kumpeyalɔyat ('Death carries quivers') and Kurbɔk ('Stooping ditch'). Sacred groves (*tɔŋgbana*) often serve as landmarks to identify a locality; e.g. Dooni (at Doo), means the precincts of that *tɔŋgban*, vaguely defined, as are all such localities, by position and not by definite boundaries.

We shall see later how the social structure of a settlement is anchored to a locality. The physical environment is built into the whole edifice of native life. Tale economic pursuits demand an intimate knowledge—unscientific but remarkably efficient at the level of their social organization and technical development—of natural history and topography. Tale leechcraft, on its empirical side, depends on this knowledge; and every prominent and many an inconspicuous feature of the landscape has its meaning and place in native social relations. A great boulder may be the children's playground, or the women's pounding-floor, or a shrine. A hoary baobab tree is not only an amenity and a source of useful products, but also a lineage shrine. A furrow, an outcrop of laterite, or a fringe of grass, may mark the boundary of a farm plot. A shrub, hardly noticeable on the bank of a dry watercourse, is a medicine. In consequence, the natural environment forms a very important aspect of the native's social space. In his own settlement, and especially in his section of the settlement, he knows every rock and tree and almost every tuft of grass, the qualities of the soil, and the ownership of farm plots.

In addition to his own settlement a man usually knows pretty thoroughly the natural environment of neighbouring settlements with which his clan has close social bonds and, more superficially, that of his mother's natal settlement and of settlements in which close extra-clan kin live. The great majority of men, even the younger men who have been abroad for lengthy periods, are all well versed in the geography, the vegetation, and the fauna of the tracts of bush and river-bank on the borders of Taleland, the economic exploitation of which is indispensable for the subsistence of the natives. Every dry season many men and boys have to go out to the nearest bush to cut grass for thatching, rafters for roofing, shafts for their implements, *bayana* (*Bauhinia*, spp.) bark for the rope used in house-building, canes for their bows and reeds for their arrows, tree-stumps for their shrines, and many medicinal roots and leaves. They go hunting in near and distant tracts of bush, so that most adult men are familiar with every hunting bush within a day's march of their settlement; and they go fishing in the pools left in the river-beds during the dry season. Women are as expert as men in these matters. They take part in the big fishing drives, comb the fields for edible herbs, seek out deposits of clay for pottery and gravel for beating floors, explore the neighbouring bush for firewood, for reeds to make sleeping mats, for fruits and edible leaves.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

In marked contrast is the average person's ignorance of settlements, even near at hand, with which his clan has no close social bonds or with which he has no personal links of kinship or friendship. Tallensi acquire their knowledge of geography and natural history gradually in childhood, by direct experience. It is already well established by the age of 9 or 10, and grows *pari passu* with the expansion of the child's social space. The basis of this is the child's natal settlement, where, except for occasional visits to kinsfolk elsewhere, it spends its entire childhood. But even adults had little liberty of movement in the past, since they could hardly go unmolested in settlements unrelated to theirs by clanship or political ties or where they had no kinsfolk. Most of the older people have never been outside Taleland, and many of them have never, or only rarely, visited some of the settlements within an hour's walk of their own.

A Talǝŋ inevitably has a profound emotional attachment to his native settlement. It is striking how many Tale emigrants return home eventually after years of absence, casting aside the flesh-pots of Ashanti or the rich fields of Mampurugu. '*Kpala m-mah*—Here it is pleasant', they say, in spite of the penury of existence; for here are your kith and kin, here is the scene of your childhood joys and sorrows, and above all, the abode of your forefathers. The Talǝŋ's empirical knowledge of his habitat is the precipitate in his thought and experience of the economic and structural facts that determine the local fixity of his native settlement. His affective attachment to it finds an institutionalized expression and support in the ancestor cult.

Settlement Boundaries

The hub of Taleland is Tongo (see map on p. 15). This ancient settlement, geographically central and politically nodal in the network of interclan relations, provides a very good model of the structure of a typical Tale settlement.

As we know, the Tongo branch of Mosuor biis live in such close spatial and social propinquity with Zubiuŋ, Gbizug, and Zoo that these clans are often spoken of collectively as 'the people of Tongo (Tǝŋdɛm)'. For precision, Tongo proper is referred to as Tǝŋ-Nayiri—the Chief's House of Tongo—all over Taleland. Throughout the Mole-Dagbane-speaking region clans which hold a chiefship are thus identified by reference to it. Those which have tɛndaanas are sometimes called Tɛndaaŋ, on the same principle. Thus outsiders distinguish between Sie-Nayiri and Sie-Tɛndaaŋ.

Tǝŋ-Nayiri, Tongo proper, forms an irregular block of homesteads, somewhat less than three square miles in area and is one of the largest settlements in Taleland. It comprised, in 1934, 192 homesteads and a total population of about 2,400.[1] This does not include Tongo people

[1] Calculations, based on my own census samples and on figures kindly supplied to me by the A.D.C. Zuarungu, show that in Taleland the average number of people of both sexes and all ages occupying a homestead is 12 to 14. Owing to the variation in the constitution of homesteads this figure must be accepted with reserve; but it is sufficient for a rough estimate of population in a country where accurate statistics do not exist.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

his ritual powers and duties give a tendaana very great prestige and considerable moral authority over people living on his *tɛŋ* whether or not they belong to his clan. At Tongo, for instance, the Gbizug tendaana is spoken of and treated with a respect little short of reverence, both in the formal interclan politico-ritual relations and in commonplace relations of everyday life. 'He owns the land (*ɔn nso tɛŋ la*)', Tongo people say gravely, 'we are strangers here. We only grow our millet here to feed ourselves. If we offend the tendaana he can drive us away from here.' The last part of this statement is not literally true. A tendaana cannot drive people off their ancestral dwelling and farm-land; to say the least it would be ethically evil. It is not legal but ritual action that the statement implies. I have seen a tendaana's curse throw a person into a state of anxiety that persisted for days, until a reconciliation was effected. But this was anxiety concerning the mystical consequences of the tendaana's curse, without any assumption as to its jural implications. The term 'owner' applied to a chief or tendaana, as we have stated earlier, is simply a means of subsuming in one concept the configuration of rights and duties, privileges and obligations which defines the relations of a community with its politico-ritual heads in reference to its local framework and to the common values symbolized in ritual doctrine and practice. The material earth and the mystical Earth meet in the functions of tendaanas.

Many Tallensi are able to formulate the distinction between the earth in its physical, utilitarian aspect and the Earth in its ritual manifestations. But in general the distinction is inherent in the economic and politico-ritual institutions of the natives rather than expressed in explicit doctrine or language. Whenever or wherever the concept *tɛŋ* comes up it tends to be ambiguous. It suggests both aspects of the earth, though the major emphasis may be on one or the other. It is as if neither aspect of the earth can appear without the other following like its shadow.

This holds particularly with the *tendaanditib* clans. Their ritual bonds with their *tɛs* form a halo around their utilitarian relations with the earth. In most of these clans, therefore, it is a taboo of the Earth to sell parcels of land. To sell farm-land (*kuo*) is like selling pieces of the mystical *tɛŋ* to which they are bound by the strongest ties of interest, emotion, and values. Namoo clans which do not have tendaanas do not feel this strong and direct tie with their *tɛŋ* in its mystical aspect. The utilitarian, material aspect of the earth falls apart from its mystical counterpart more easily for them. Hence it is mostly in such communities that farm-land is sold. But even Namoos say that the earth as such, the *tɛŋ*, cannot be sold. In practice the sale of farm-land is a sale of usufructuary rights and is confined to clansmen or kinsmen as we know. It is, always, a transaction between men who are bound to one another by the fundamental common and mutual interests of Tale collective life. Men cannot buy land in a Tale settlement in which they have no kin. In this, as in other aspects of their relationship towards locality, the Namoos put the major emphasis on the coherence of the community as this is focused in the chiefship. And fundamentally the coherence of the community is as indivisible as the continuity of territory. The Chief of Tongo, for example, exercises an ever-present influence on the prosperity and welfare of the members